

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****SHOWRUNNER KATORI HALL AND CAST OF STARZ SERIES  
P-VALLEY TALK RACE AND CONTROVERSY IN  
EMMY MAGAZINE**

(LOS ANGELES – May 15, 2023) — As the evocative Starz series *P-Valley* enters its third season, it continues to delve into issues of race and sexuality. Along with members of the cast and crew, creator and showrunner Katori Hall talks with *emmy* about creating a topical show that explores humanity through The Pynk, a rundown Mississippi strip club, and the Black exotic dancers who perform there. This upcoming issue of the award-winning official publication of the Television Academy is on newsstands May 18.

Initially, *P-Valley*, an adaptation of Hall's 2015 play *Pussy Valley*, was rejected by nearly every network. Some wouldn't even let Hall into the room to pitch — the material deemed too "taboo" and "niche" with in-your-face sexuality, sometimes indecipherable Southern Black vernacular and a cast of characters in

skin-baring costumes. But with a greenlight from Starz, the show debuted in July 2020 and became a critical and commercial hit. "I always say that this is a show that is not purely entertainment, it's edutainment," Hall says. "We've proved that we're not just the stripper show. We are a show about humanity."

In "**More Than Meets the Eye**," Hall discusses season two using the darkest days of the pandemic as a backdrop to chronicle the cash-strapped community in the fictional Mississippi town of Chucalissa and show how Black people fared through COVID-19. "It allowed me to delve into other topics people wouldn't necessarily think are connected to the pandemic, i.e., mental health," Hall says.

Through Mercedes, a dancer played by Brandee Evans, *P-Valley* explores complicated relationships. In episode seven, she drives her daughter to the state's sole abortion clinic, presenting options and truths that relate to Black women.

These storylines will often fill the actors' inboxes with messages from viewers. "It's beautiful because we really have impacted people," Evan says, "and they don't say it because they just love the strippers and The Pynk. They love the mother in Mercedes. They love the strength."

*P-Valley* prides itself on exploring some of the shame and secrets in the Black community, including those related to sex and sexuality. One of the more controversial storylines involved the character Lil' Murda, a rapper struggling with his sexual orientation, played by J. Alphonse Nicholson. "He's a Black man trying to figure out if he considers himself bisexual or whatever the case may be," Nicholson says. "I knew people were going to have issues. Our community is not used to accepting people like this in real life. But *P-Valley* definitely has done its part to bring that [acceptance] to the forefront [and by far] the love outweighs the hate."

Discourse that evolves from the show is Hall's goal. "I wanted to make people think," she says. "I wanted to hold space for difficult conversations." Nicco Annan, who plays Uncle Clifford, a Black trans and gender-nonconforming character, says, "I wanted to make sure people could see beyond what they thought they knew of someone that was nonbinary."

Entering season three, Hall plans to embrace "more of the glitter that The Pynk is known for" while appreciating the way the Black narrative of *P-Valley* has created a lasting effect. "There is an impact," she says. "We're a show that is about demanding that Black folks — in all of our different shades — be seen through the lens of respect that all human beings are so deserving of. I think that's a really wonderful thing."

### **Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:**

- In "**Strangest Things**," the team behind the music-biopic parody *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story* talks with *emmy* about bringing the highly fictionalized TV movie to audiences. Created by producer-director Eric Appel (*Brooklyn Nine-Nine*) and co-written by Yankovic himself, the Roku Channel comedy stars Daniel Radcliffe in the title role.
- Joe and Anthony Russo's spy thriller *Citadel*, starring Richard Madden and Priyanka Chopra Jones, is only the beginning of a global TV franchise conceived by Amazon Studios chief Jennifer Salke. In "**World Wide Web**," the cast and crew talk with *emmy* about the expansive scale of the series.
- In "**Dark Matters**," *emmy* talks with the VFX supervisor, costume designer and production designer of the Netflix series *Wednesday* about bringing to life the iconic character Wednesday Addams (Jenna Ortega). The talented artisans discuss the rich combination of characters, sets and costumes.

### **About *emmy***

*Emmy*, the official publication of the Television Academy, goes behind the scenes of the industry for a unique insider's view. With wide-ranging, inclusive subjects representative of the Television Academy membership and the medium as a whole, *emmy* showcases the scope of television and profiles the people who make it happen, from the stars of top shows and artisans behind the cameras, to

programming trends and technological advances. Honored with dozens of awards for editorial excellence, *emmy* is published 12 times per year and is available on selected newsstands and at [TelevisionAcademy.com](http://TelevisionAcademy.com) for single print and digital copies as well as subscriptions.

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